

**Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**Draft Executive Committee Meeting Minutes ~ March 01, 2021**  
**On-line meeting with Zoom**

<b>Present:</b>	Kaiya Andrews, Mike Gruteke, Steve Kieselstein, Courtney Quinlan, Jesse Suter, Crista Yagjin.
<b>Absent:</b>	Julie Arel
<b>VTDDC Staff:</b>	Kirsten Murphy, Chelsea Hayward, Susan Aranoff

## **1. Welcome and Adopt Minutes:**

Courtney called the meeting to order at 10:07. Crista seconded.

## **2. Chair's Report:**

### **Membership and Annual Recruitment**

- Due to personal circumstances, 2 spots have recently opened on the Council. There are slots for: 1 self-advocate; 1 person who is a self-advocate or a family member; and 1 person who represents a non-profit organization that serves people with developmental disabilities.
- Kaiya and Gina have both volunteered to be on the Membership Committee. Courtney has reached out to several members who represent government agencies to see if anyone would be willing to be the committee's third member.
- There is a recruitment advertisement in Front Porch Forum for Chittenden County, Valley News in the Upper Valley area, Facebook, the website, and then a bookmark that may be passed around via email or in-person.

The representative from a non-profit is usually from a leader from a designated or specialized services agency but does not have to be. Committee members discussed option. Kirsten said that agency directors have "insider information" that is often valuable to the Council. The group supports Kirsten approaching the Executive Director of Champlain Community Services, Beth Sightler.

Courtney spoke to diversity, which is a requirement for Councils in the DD Act. She would like to have someone representing a disability category that is currently not represented – for example, someone who is deaf or blind. She reminded committee members to think about racial, ethnic and geographic diversity as well.

### **3. Executive Directors Report:**

- **Final letter of award for FFY'20**

The Council recently received its Notice of Award for the rest of its FFY'21 appropriation. There is about \$20,000 more than in FFY'20. Other adjustments to the budget include: (1) \$10,000 was put back into the budget since there will be no national disability council conference in the summer. (2) Unfortunately, \$5,000 for FFY'18 was returned to the federal government.

Kirsten said that there are now about \$40,000 in unobligated funds in the FFY'21 budget. These can be used in the next six months or rolled-over into FFY'22. Since the Council is at the end of a five-year cycle, it should only invest in short-term projects – for example to meet an urgent need related to Covid-19 -- or in an activity that supports an existing effort like the employment research papers. She plans to convene the Program Committee in the next 6 weeks to discuss any final investments and to be brainstorming projects that support the draft goals and objectives for the new Five-Year State Plan.

- **Participation in vaccine rollout**

Each state is treating people with developmental disabilities differently in how they are prioritized for the vaccine. The list of chronic conditions identified for high priority by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) leaves out many disabilities and chronic health conditions that place a person at high risk of becoming very sick from Covid-19. Kirsten has been successful in advocating that Vermont add 3 additional criteria to the CDC list for the next “band” of vaccine eligible citizens: (1) people with chromosomal abnormalities like Down Syndrome; (2) people with an intellectual disability; and (3) people with a disability like Cerebral Palsy that has compromised their ability to breathe.

- **Legislative update & new bill tracking tool**

The legislature is currently on its break for Town Meeting Week. Susan updated the committee on bills related to VTDDC's platform. She noted that she reminds legislative committees often that Council members are available to testify, but legislators are very reluctant to increase the length of hearings while conducting business of Zoom. The fact that we cannot talk with elected officials in the halls and cafeteria at the State House during the pandemic has been a tremendous loss for advocates, Sue said.

- ⇒ S. 16. The Council would like to see the “Kicked Out” report updated annually and a decrease in the use of exclusionary discipline in schools. This bill would create a committee to monitor data collection and disparities in school discipline. Testimony has focused on the composition of the committee, the role of the Agency of Education, and whether an existing entity could address these issues instead of a new committee. Member Crista Yagjin has testified on this bill before Senate Education. Courtney expressed her desire to testify, especially on the issue of truancy. There are several related bills that also address role of school resource officers and whether children under the age of 8 should be subject to exclusionary discipline.

Jesse mentioned that a recent article showed the unintended consequences of a similar bill in Oregon: Instead of reducing discrimination, it increased the disparities in discipline. It is not clear whether the increase stemmed from better reporting or signaled a change in practice. The report is found here :

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4638>

- ⇒ J.H.R. 2 is a formal apology for the role that the Vermont State Legislature played in the Eugenics Survey. The Council strongly favors this bill, and member Terry Holden testified on it recently before the House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs. There is a companion bill that would address the need for “more than an apology,” through a truth and reconciliation process.
- ⇒ H. 103 would require an independent review of the All Payer Accountable Care Model before Vermont renews its support for this approach to healthcare reform. While this bill will probably not move forward, it has started some productive conversations in the Senate, Susan reported.
- ⇒ H. 210 is a bill that would create an Office of Health Equity to address health disparities experienced by Vermonters with disabilities, BIPOC Vermonters, and people who identify as LGBTQIA. Kirsten recently provided testimony to House Healthcare regarding data from the Health Department demonstrating the health disparities of Vermonters with disabilities. This issue is not on the VTDDC platform, but Susan hopes that the Policy Committee will recommend adding it at the March Quarterly meeting.

- **March meetings for Five Year Plan**

“We’re down to the wire,” Kirsten said, explaining that the 3 Planning Teams must decide on the draft goals and objectives for the next State Plan by the March 25<sup>th</sup> Quarterly meeting. This will be a busy month, with 9 separate planning team meetings.

- **Addition to the AGENDA: Planning for March 25 Meeting**

The Committee would like the agenda to include, not in this order:

- ⇒ Proposal by the Policy Committee to add H. 210, the Health Equity Bill, to the VTDDC Platform.
- ⇒ VOTE to adopt draft Goals and Objectives
- ⇒ VOTE to recommend new members for appointment by the Governor.
- ⇒ A “light” icebreaker that is not related to Covid-19
- ⇒ A brief check-in with members to see how they are managing during the pandemic
- ⇒ Review of each committee and an invitation to join, especially the Program Committee.

At the June meeting, Courtney will provide an overview of the in-depth training that she has received through the advanced level special education advocacy training by the Council for Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA).

#### **4. Annual Evaluation of Executive Director:**

- **Revise Executive Director’s annual goals.**

This item was tabled to allow time to discuss the agenda for the March 25 Quarterly meeting.

#### **6. Adjourn:**

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Hayward, Coordinator of Communications and Administration